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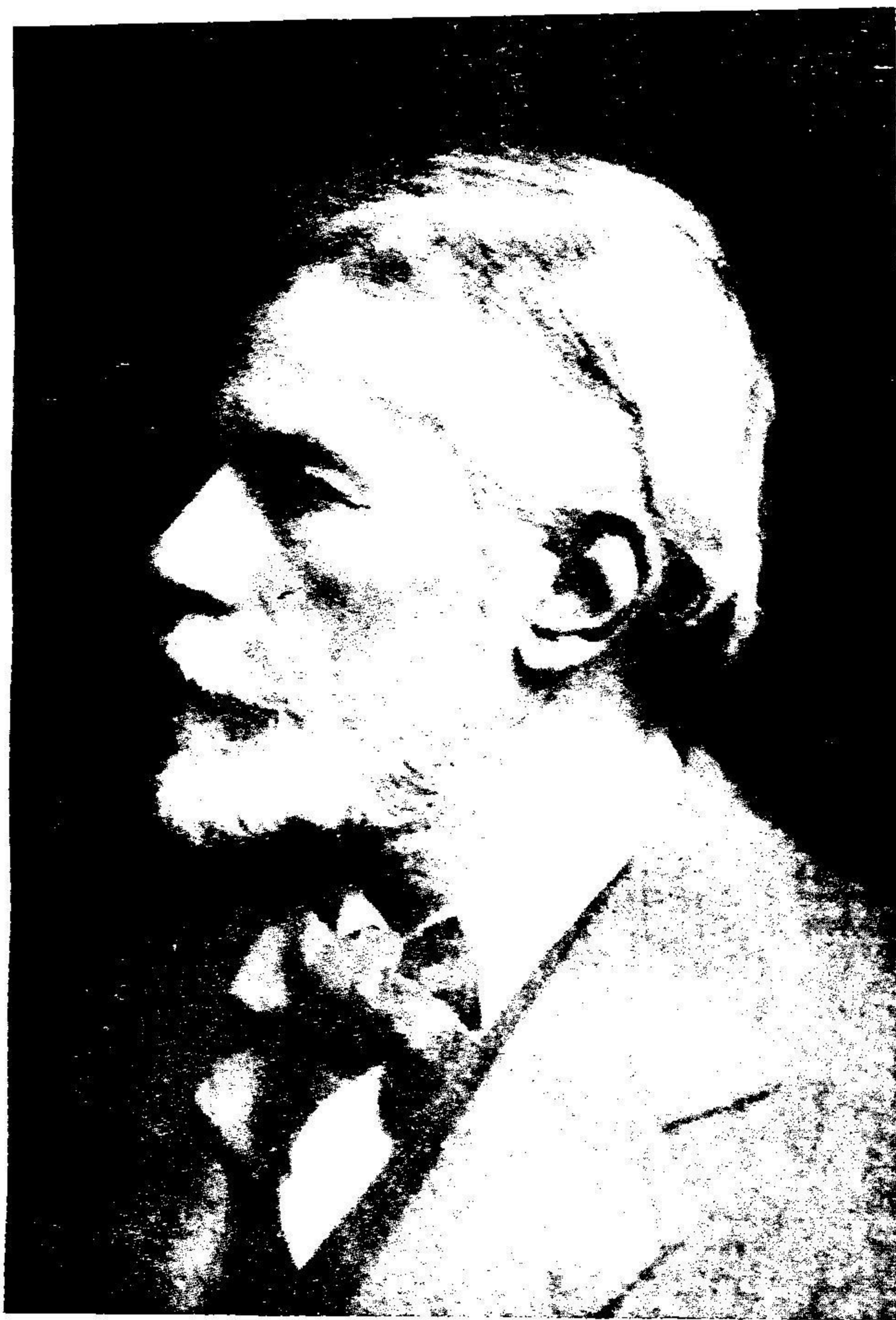
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# EDWARD CARPENTER

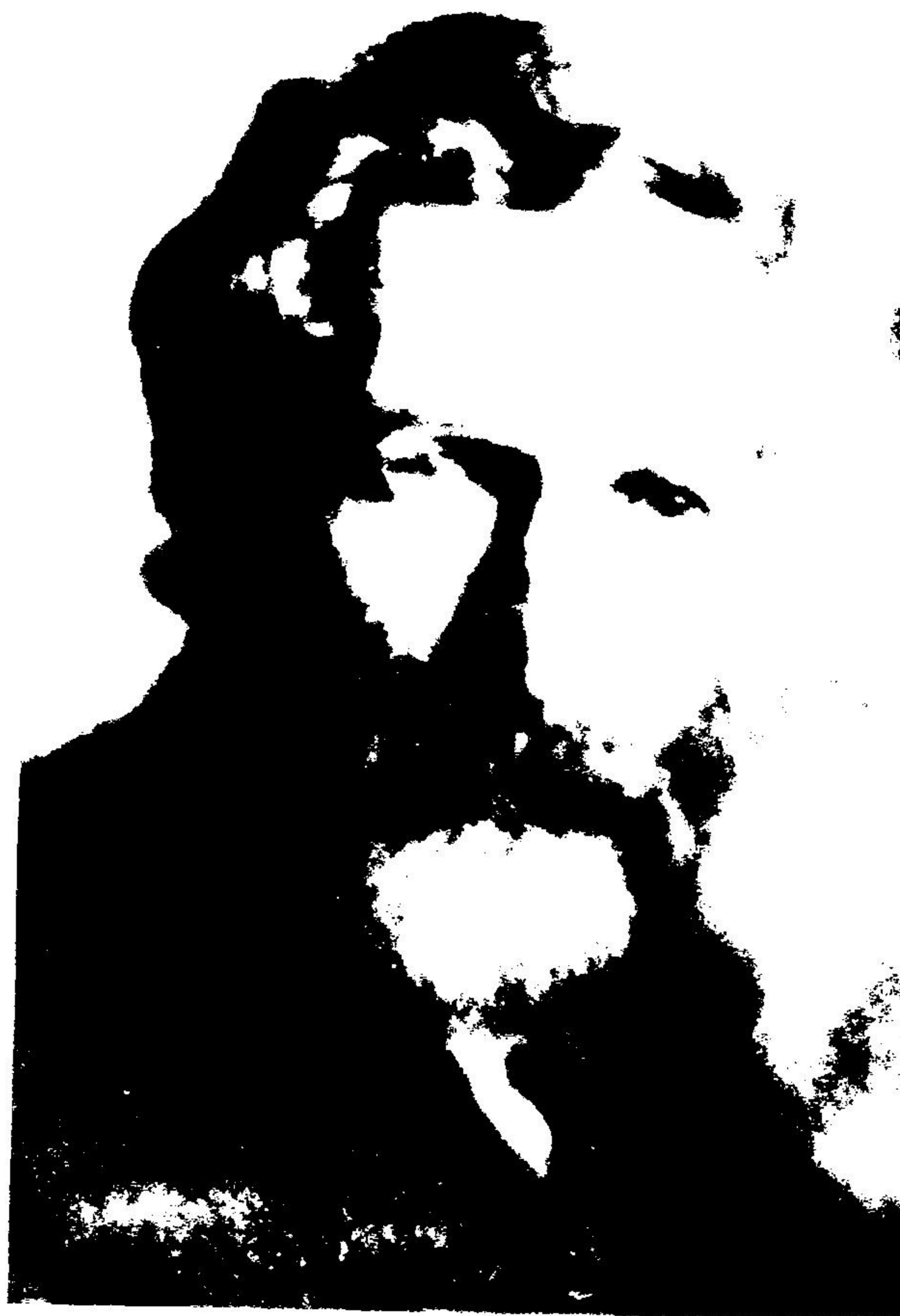
## The English Tolstoi

By T. H. BELL



*Edw. Carpenter*





OSCAR WILSON

THE NEW YORKER, MAY 19, 1911. OSCAR WILSON, WAS  
DOLPHAS, and the other. The other  
and the other. The other.

Let the other be the other.

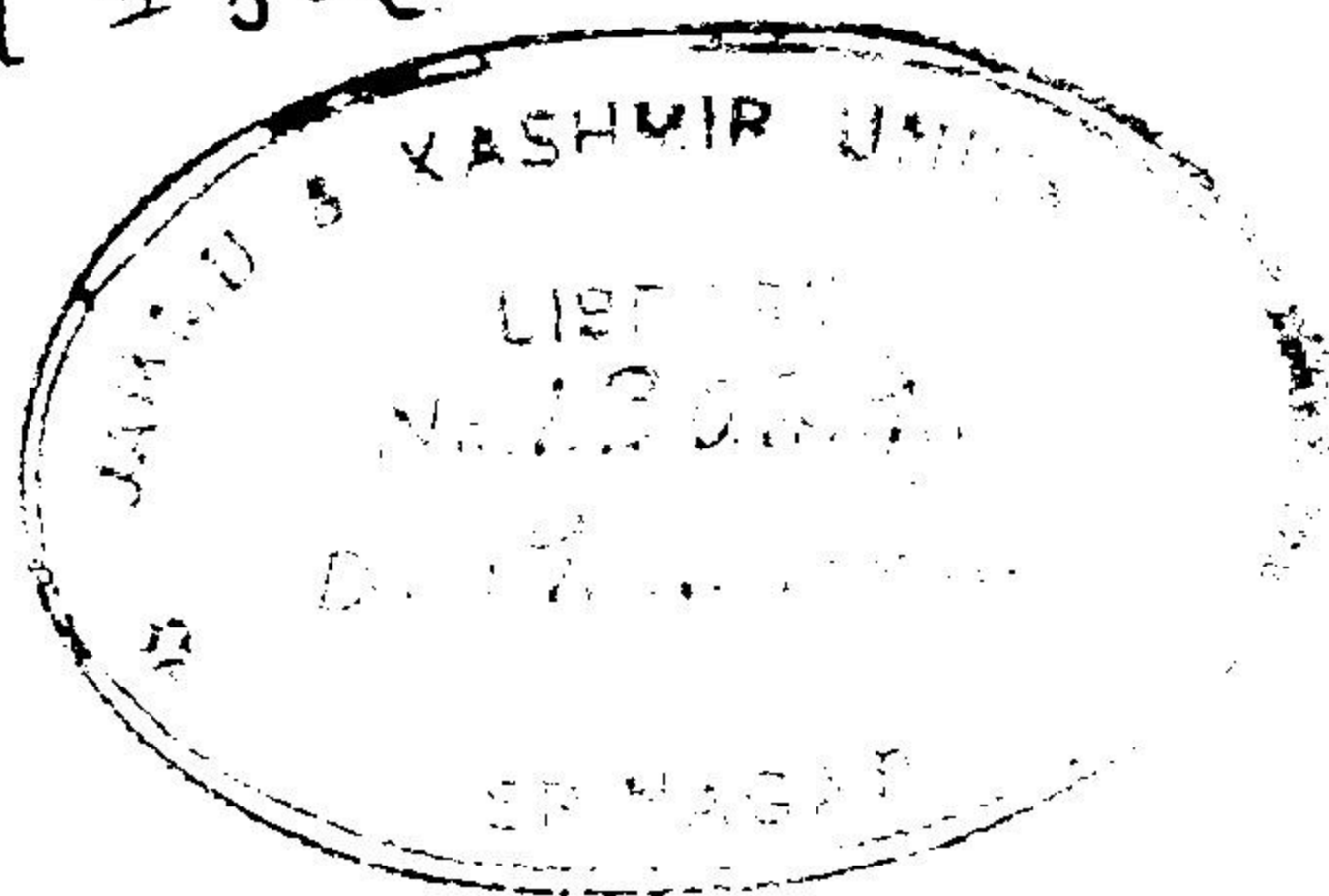
# EDWARD CARPENTER

## *The English Tolstoi*

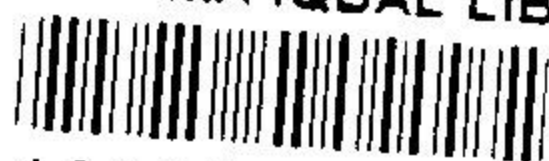
By  
T. H. BELL



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## PUBLISHERS' INTRODUCTION

In furtherance of the advocacy of Freedom for All Mankind the Libertarian Group of Los Angeles publish this as the first of a series of studies of great Libertarians.

It is issued as a Testimonial Edition in honor of Thomas Paine, whose years of social activity, all but the first three or four devoted to the American Movement. At a Testimonial Dinner held for him under the auspices of the local Libertarian organizations February 27, 1933. It was the first of many of this output of his trenchant pen.

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Desire determines what we do, but our desires are determined by our ideals. If this were not true, all education would be useless. The born slave is unconscious of his chains; he is not galled by them. All are born ignorant, whether slave or free. Education and freedom create the differences. The need for freedom is the most powerful motive force in the world—except to the slave-minded or those whose minds are centered on economic needs alone.

The free-minded man desires liberty for himself and extends it to his fellows. That is why, invariably, he is a propagandist. He would persuade, not force.

This pamphlet is submitted for your keenest consideration. If it appeals to you, send \$1.00 for a dozen to H. Yaffe, 504 N. Soto St., Los Angeles, and pass a good thing along. Indicate also if you would subscribe to further numbers and state what biographical studies would most appeal to you. I name only a few: William Godwin, John Stuart Mill, Benjamin R. Tucker, Voltairine De Cleyre, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Ricardo Flores Magon, Michael Bakunin, Leo Tolstoi, Peter Kropotkin, Pierre J. Proudhon, Louise Michel, Elisée Reclus, Errico Malatesta.

CASSIUS V. COOK.

For the LIBERTARIAN GROUP of LOS ANGELES.





# EDWARD CARPENTER

## *The English Tolstoi*

Edward Carpenter died June, 1929, a great Englishman and the greatest of modern British Anarchists. (I take care to say "modern" because of Godwin and Shelley.) At 85 he had lived so long that his name was perhaps less known than when he was still in full activity—when his ideas were arousing most strenuous opposition among his fellow radicals. All along, anyhow, his influence was rather upon the intellectuals than upon the people direct. He was a poor speaker and his ideas were always away ahead of the time. Even in the case of the intellectuals, their attitude toward him was quite often one of surprise and incredulity that such an able man could seriously put forward such "outrageous" views. Only in the last few years have I read criticism of "science" such as he was making forty years ago—to a radical movement puzzled and indignant.

I have called him the English Tolstoi.

Like Tolstoi, he was born an aristocrat. His father was a naval officer; his grandfather was an admiral, and one of his nephews is an admiral now; the family was "well connected" among the aristocracy; two of his sisters acquired the title of "Lady."

Like Tolstoi, after beginning a career he had his mind opened to the evils of present-day society and abandoned his foolish, artificial, useless life for a reasonable, natural and useful one.

Like Tolstoi, in his work he showed an extraordinary originality. He scoffed at many of the doctrines most firmly held by the other radicals of his day. As I have already indicated, he was as skeptical about many of the claims of "science" as Tolstoi himself—and with a better knowledge of them.

Like Tolstoi, he appealed first of all to his own class. And, like Tolstoi, he presented that appeal in a style that made it literature.

Like Tolstoi, he dealt largely with the sex question—with equal courage, with more common sense and with much better success.

Like Tolstoi, he was a good deal of a mystic. His mysticism, like Tolstoi's, was free from superstition; but unlike Tolstoi's, it was also free from reference to authority and reverence therefor.

Some part of his temperament came evidently from that father, who, as a naval officer, found himself horrorstricken when he had to fire on a boatload of "enemy" human beings and felt



an immense relief, when he missed, to find his duty done and nobody any the worse for it. It is significant of the world's progress that this intelligent, serious and studious father did not even finally arrive at anything nearer rationalism than "Broad Church" (the comparatively tolerant and enlightened section of the state Church of England).

### THE SCHOLAR

At Cambridge University, after devoting the first year or two almost entirely to rowing, as a young man active and vigorous, Carpenter set himself to study, at first merely to pass his examinations but soon with real interest and before long with remarkable success. At twenty-seven he found himself a recognized scholar. He was given the hint that he would be made a "Fellow" of his college if he took "orders" (became an ordained clergyman of the Church of England). Well, that seemed all right, he had no objection, he had no recognized rationalistic views; it was not until he was being examined on his faith in the Articles of the Church that he realized having gone a step further than his father's "Broad Churchism." But he was accepted despite his hesitation, and was even appointed a curate under the then famous Rev. F. D. Maurice, a man who could talk very beautifully about religion without any clear doctrine at all. It was about this time that he was invited by Queen Alexandria to become the tutor of her two sons, one of them the present King George.

Here he was then, a highly successful and promising young man on his way to being a Bishop, at least. And then, alas, the disaster came. A fellow student with a book he could make nothing out of, passed it over to Carpenter—and the whole career went smash, for the book was one of Walt Whitman's.

Carpenter soon saw that his whole life had to be placed upon a different basis. He insisted first on being "defrocked" (being *unmade* a "priest"), obstinately disregarding the advice of his friends about such Quixotic conduct.

He tried at first for some years to make an honest living by lecturing on science and on music for the University Extension. But gradually he saw his way to a better course. Finally he bought a little piece of land and started in as a market gardener. He learned to use the pick and shovel, the spade and the hoe. He raised his own stuff and sold it in the Sheffield market himself.

### DOES IT PAY?

His friends were not so sure about it being a better course. Here is the beginning of an article of his, "Does It Pay?": "Having lately embarked in an agricultural enterprise on a small scale, I confess I was somewhat disconcerted, if not actually annoyed, by the persistency with which—from the very outset and when I had been only two or three months at work—I was



met by the question at the head of this paper. Not only sisters, cousins and aunts but relatives much more remote, and mere acquaintances, at the very first suggestion that I was engaged in trade, always plumped out with the query, Does it pay? And this struck me the more because though I knew that the point was important, I had in the innocence of my heart fancied that there might be other considerations of at least comparable weight. But I soon found out my mistake; for none of my well-to-do friends asked whether the work I was doing was wanted, or whether it would be useful to the community, or a means of healthy life to those engaged in it, or whether it was *honest* and of a kind that could be carried on without interior defilement; or even (except one or two) whether I liked it, but always: does it pay?"

The venture was a great success—in Carpenter's way of looking at things. The active, creative, physical work, yielding a plainly useful result, was to him greatly preferable to a sedentary life spent in studying matters of very small interest to present-day humanity, infinitely preferable to spending life in going through what had now become to him a silly and hypocritical rigmarole. To him, anyhow, it was a great success. He did not go as far as Tolstoi, who wanted to live in all things like a peasant. Carpenter was not an ascetic; he lived simply but without any idea of cutting things down to the utmost limit. By this time he had become, of course, a vegetarian; but he did not deny himself the little pleasures of ordinary life, enjoying life heartily all through, I am sure. He had not till then read Thoreau's *Walden*, but when he did, though he appreciated it, it made no change in his ways. In his mode of living there was, you see, no "sacrifice." Tolstoi went much further. But then, alas, the story goes that Tolstoi, though he adhered to peasant fare in the daytime, sometimes could not resist the temptation of rummaging his wife's pantry at night. It is a very risky business going too far in sacrifice; if the Englishman, as is usual with Englishmen, did not go as far as the Russian, did not go to the limit, he did live his life consistently, and none the less consistently for its being cheerful.

### SOCIALISM

He had by this time come in touch with the modern Socialist movement, just being established in Great Britain. He was soon using his leisure in its propaganda. I met him in it for the first time in or about 1884. He had come to Edinburgh on a visit to his mother's relations (she was Scotch, while his father's people were Cornish) and we got him to give a lecture to us of the Scottish Land and Labor League. (We had become affiliated with the Socialist League of which William Morris was the outstanding figure.) With his hesitant style, something like that of a college professor, hemming and hawing till he got just the correct words for his statement, I thought him then just about the poorest



speaker I had ever listened to, yet there was something about him of a charmingly comradelike personality and a man strikingly original, which made a very deep impression upon my youthful mind. He says, in "My Days and Dreams," speaking of 1883: "From that time forward I worked definitely along the Socialist line, with a drift, as was natural, towards Anarchism. I do not know that at any time I looked upon the Socialist program as final, and it is certain that I never anticipated a cast-iron regulation of industry, but I saw that the current Socialism afforded an excellent text for an attack upon the existing competitive system, and a good means of rousing the slumbering consciences—especially of the rich; and in that way I have worked for it and the Anarchist ideal consistently."

His writings were not received with any great enthusiasm by the leaders of the Socialist movement. Why, in "England's Ideal" there was not a single quotation from the gospel of Saint Marx, and surplus value was scarcely mentioned! So Carpenter remained an outsider. He did not address himself at first to the working men at all. Probably he had sense enough to realize that he knew but little about their lives and their psychology; and so he addressed himself to the people he did know, to whom he could really give good counsel, to his own class, people in the difficulties from which he had extricated himself. He spoke to them of their foolish and empty lives, unnatural, unhealthy, unhappy, wasted, empty of everything worth having or worth striving for, circumscribed by prejudice and by the necessity of holding prestige, spent in working—when they did work—at something in which they could take no real interest and which was of no real use, forbidden by the custom of their caste to take any active physical part in the honestly useful work of the world, parasites, unhappy themselves, living upon people poor and suffering.

### THE YOUNG WOMAN THEN

It is difficult for the younger generation in these days to realize how empty indeed that life was. In the case of the woman the change has been revolutionary in the highest degree. (The Anarchist revolution is not one of the distant future, you know; it is taking place now and a great part of it has already taken place.)

Carpenter himself had six or seven sisters and he tried to emancipate young women like them from the stupid prejudices and caste customs by which their lives were being wasted. Those were still the days when a young lady was dressed in skirts that swept the street; her waist was tightly cramped in a corset; her mind carefully confined to what was strictly proper. Physical outlet for her energy or her emotions there was none. The only game allowed was croquet, in which a nicely dressed-up young lady gave a ball some gentle taps with a mallet—about as much



exercise as in marbles. The bicycle had not yet come and she would not have been allowed to ride it if it had. She might live near the beach, but she must not think of swimming any more than of flying. If she was allowed to bathe it was from a bathing-coach on wheels, in which she was drawn by a horse into the water as far as possible from the eyes of the young male. Then she could play around a little, but with decorum and in a dress that came right down to her heels. The jollity of hiking and the sport of athletics were not for her. "Sex!" What did you say? Why, in those days a properly brought-up young lady did not have any sex at all!

Carpenter's first propaganda, then, was addressed to those who needed only courage and determination to free themselves. He wrote with understanding, with sympathy, with style and with humor. And it is plain now that his propaganda was not without its effect; that class of his has been reached after all. Many individuals in it have been much influenced; even as a class it is not what it was. Stanley Baldwin was the Tory premier, but his son stands for Labor. No, he does not go as far as Carpenter, but his position is just as significant. We have such aristocrats as Bertrand Russell (Earl Russell) going all the way; and we have had such writers as H. G. Wells pointing it out. We have now, in Carpenter's country, a whole young generation in revolt, throwing away the taboos of their fathers and mothers. I never pick up a new English novel depicting the young generation in England without being astonished once again. For all of that, the work of Carpenter, directly or indirectly, went for something.

### CIVILIZATION: ITS CAUSE AND CURE

The Socialist leaders of that day were not pleased at all that he should bother about the parasites; the revolution seemed then to be much too close at hand to waste time or sympathy upon them. But Carpenter went quietly upon his own way, and some years later published another book, "Civilization: Its Cause and Cure." In this second one Marx was not even mentioned. The leaders of Socialist thought had been willing to pass over a first mistake, but this second book was really too much. They did want a man to stick to the point, to explain to the workers that all the trouble lay in the class control of the means of production and the simple remedy was to vote into power the able middle-class men who would take possession of these means and administer them properly. Be careful above all not to bring in free thought or free love to frighten the voter. Nothing but the economic cause and the political remedy. Simple and easy.

Whereas this Carpenter fellow plunges right overhead into the deepest water. He begins:

"We find ourselves today in the midst of a somewhat peculiar



state of society, which we call civilization, but which even to the most optimistic among us does not seem altogether desirable. Some of us, indeed, are inclined to think that it is a kind of disease which the various races of mankind have to pass through—as children pass through measles or whooping-cough; but if it is a disease then there is this serious consideration to be made: that while history tells of many nations that have been attacked by it, of many that have succumbed to it, and of some that are still in the throes of it, we know of no single case in which a nation has fully recovered from it and passed through it to a more normal and healthy condition. In other words, the development of human society has never yet (that we know of) passed beyond a certain definite and apparently final stage in the process we call civilization; at that stage it has always succumbed or been arrested."

(This was written a long time before Spengler wrote his famous book, "The Decline of the West," about civilization being the final stage of a people's development, after which comes decline.)

Carpenter explains: "But the word Disease is applicable to our social as well as to our physical condition. For, as in the body, Disease arises from the loss of the physical unity which constitutes health and so takes the form of warfare or discord between the various parts, or of the abnormal development of individual organs, or the consumption of the system by predatory germs and growths, so in our modern life we find the unity gone which constitutes true society, and in its place warfare of classes and individuals, abnormal development of some to the detriment of others, and consumption of the organism by masses of social parasites."

You see, he does not use the word Civilization "in a kind of ideal sense, as to indicate a state of future culture towards which we are tending—the implied assumption that a sufficiently long course of top hats and telephones will in the end bring us to the ideal condition, while any little drawbacks in the process—are explained as being merely accidental and temporary." He prefers to limit its use to a definite historic stage, in which we actually find ourselves at present.

"In all this the influence of Property is apparent enough. It is evident that the growth of Property through the increase of man's power of production reacts upon the man in three ways: to draw him away namely. (1) from Nature, (2) from his true self, (3) from his fellows. With the advent of a Civilization then founded upon Property the unity of the old tribal society is broken up—at last society itself becomes an organization by which the rich fatten upon the vitals of the poor, the strong upon the murder of the weak. And then arises the institution of Gov-



ernment. \* \* \* force has to be used by the possessors in order to maintain the law barriers against the non-possessors . . . and finally the formal Government arises mainly as the expression of such force."

His remedy then is not a mere affair of voting into power the proper party. It is nothing less than a return to nature and to community of human life—"towards a complex human Communism and towards individual freedom." It is, in fact, though he does not mention the word Anarchism, an Anarchist-Communism—presented not quite as it is usually presented, but presented by a man of letters, a man of bold originality, a man intensely a humanitarian, and a poet.

Here is an extract from his "Towards Industrial Freedom":

"I have sketched rather roughly the evils which arise from the industrial arrangements. In the later chapters I endeavor to infer what further transformations we may expect in the future. These transformations will, I take it, be largely of a psychological character—that is, they will depend upon a changed mental attitude towards life, on a changed estimate of values, even more than on a change of institutions. When people come to value beauty in their daily life more than they do now, when they long intensely for that kind of industrial freedom which causes man's handiwork to become an art and a joy, when they perceive that the glory and the sweetness of the blue sky and a clean air are assets which we cannot neglect without peril to our souls and bodies, when they understand that cooperation is not only valuable because it increases the industrial freedom of men, but much more valuable when it liberates their dormant instinct of mutual helpfulness and love—when they see that all these inner things and many others are of more importance for human happiness than the mere increase of external riches—then indeed the Shop-keeping Age will have passed away.

"It becomes increasingly evident, I think, that over and beyond any formula of reform what is needed is a new spirit of social and industrial life. Without that even the best institutions will be of little avail. . . . only on the condition of spiritual and creative freedom can a society be really human and healthy."

No radical publication of that time was so fiercely assailed as "Civilization: Its Cause and Cure." Even the Anarchists of that day failed to recognize their own idea in such different dress. We could not, of course, present it today quite in that fashion; most of us see now that Carpenter's presentation of property breaking up the unity of the old tribal society is not true historically; exploitation and slavery arose not through gradual differentiation between the rich and the poor, but suddenly out of war and conquest. His emphasis on property was just the emphasis of that day, accepted then even by most Anarchists.



## MODERN SCIENCE

The objection to his "Civilization" blew over after a while. After all, they said, the man is a poet. Yes, but confound it, they had forgotten that he was also a scientist. The next thing with which he startled the radical world was "Modern Science—A Criticism." Was it possible? Had the lunatic turned religionist, or what? To criticize Science! The one thing sacred, to attack which was blasphemy!

Yes, it really did seem blasphemy in those days when the fight was still on in regard to evolution, and when, moreover, we were so close to a solution of everything—how much nearer, alas, than we are now!

I need hardly tell you that Carpenter was not attacking Science in the good work it had done. Of course not. What he was doing was to scoff at the pretensions of many of its adepts and the certainty they attributed to the hypotheses of the day—useful enough for practical purposes, no doubt, nay, even valuable, if not indispensable, but final—ah, no!

"The various theories and views of nature which we hold are merely the fugitive envelopes of the successive stages of human growth—each set of theories and views belonging organically to the moral and emotional stage which has been reached and being in some sort the expression of it; so that the attempt at any given time to set up an explanation of phenomena which shall be valid in itself and without reference to the mental condition of those who set it up, necessarily ends in failure—the notion has so far gained ground that the 'laws' of science are immutable facts and eternal statements of verity—that it may be worth while to treat the subject a little more in detail."

Time has proven him a prophet; the criticism which brought forth such indignation then has been so justified by the progress of science herself that it is now almost commonplace.

It is surprising how little Anarchists know of the brilliant work of their comrade. It is due partly to the fact that it is so much easier for the non-learned reader to appreciate such work as Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* than to estimate the value of Carpenter's criticism of the ultimates of science, which, anyhow, was justified by degrees so slow that it never at any time caught the attention.

He was moved to his criticism in part, perhaps, by his mysticism:

"Science has failed because she has attempted to carry out the investigation of nature from the intellectual side alone—neglecting the other constituents necessarily involved in the problem. She has failed because she attempted an impossible task; for the discovery of a permanently valid and purely intellectual representation of the universe is simply impossible. Such a thing does not exist."



But there is nothing mystical about such a paragraph as this:

"This therefore is the dilemma of Science and indeed of all human knowledge, that in carrying out the process which is peculiar to it, it necessarily leaves the dry ground of reality for the watery regions of abstractions, which abstractions become ever more tenuous and ungraspable the farther it goes, and ultimately fade into mere ghosts. Nevertheless the process is a quite necessary one, for only by it can the mind deal with things."

He criticizes keenly some of the most pompous declarations of the "laws of nature" put forth in his day. Some of them are still being repeated, but not by people who are up-to-date. The complacent attitude of so many scientists of that day, as if we were going very soon to find out all about everything is no longer that taken in well-informed circles; the man of science stands no longer complacent; just now, in fact, he appears almost bewildered. Think of how the discovery of radium a little while ago played the deuce with "immutable law." And think how Einstein pushed over the very basis of the sacred Newtonian system—the system which more than anything else in science represented authority itself! Carpenter has been justified indeed.

#### SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM—PEDANTIC MARXISM

In one of his criticisms, Carpenter is directly interesting to Libertarians. The leaders of Marxist thought in those days (just like those of the Marxists in Russia today), the writers, the economists, were as pompous, pedantic and pretentious about their dogmas as the big-bugs in any other line. Some of my older readers will remember how arrogantly they divided themselves from their ignorant predecessors, "mere Utopians"; what they were teaching was now "Scientific" Socialism based upon the irrefutable laws of economics—upon Lassalle's Iron Law of Wages, upon Marx' exposition of the Theory of Value. A lot of useless scholasticism, as valuable as the Chinese Classics, is still being doped out to young workers who naively imagine they are learning modern science when they attend classes in which the text-book used was written seventy years ago, intellectually as dead as its writer. The teachers themselves do not follow their own teaching. Why humbug the workers by urging them to strike if it be true, as Lassalle taught, that workers, no matter what they do, must, so long as they are wageworkers, come down to the subsistence point—that Iron Law of Wages? Or what good our struggling for a new society if the whole thing depends upon the economic progress, upon advance in technique? Since the matter does not depend on us but upon the technicians, why not just sit down on our posteriors and wait for the good time coming in due course?

Lassalle's Iron Law has been so overwhelmingly discredited by the events that he is not often mentioned in these days, as he



used to be when Carpenter was writing. The co-operative movement at which Lassalle scoffed and which he assailed so furiously in his famous attack on Schultze-Delitsch is now put forward as a movement to be captured and dominated by the brilliant people who are still supposed to be his followers.

As for the famous Theory of Value, one of the most timely and most effective pieces of work done by Carpenter was done when he wrote his article on "The Value of the Value Theory" in the Fabian magazine, *To-Day*. The Fabians, in Great Britain, with all their faults and their middle-class assurance of themselves as the only people to direct the workers, nevertheless did good service in their day. As intellectuals they were ultimately dethroned by the Guild Socialists (saying very much the same thing that some of us Anarchists had said long years before.) but in their youth they were supreme in their common-sense refusal to be tied up by mere verbalisms or by statements strong only because they had been so long unchallenged. As regards The Value Theory, at the start they were orthodox. I remember how George Bernard Shaw, backed up by Hyndman, readily undertook to demolish a fellow named Wicksteed who actually had the nerve to attack the irrefutable theory, as explained by Marx. The debate, Shaw, with his ready wit, won easily—at least, in the opinion of the still orthodox. Imagine the astonishment then of those who had backed him up so enthusiastically when a week or two later Shaw announced that no matter who had won he had been convinced! This was the beginning of a serious examination by British Socialists of Jevons' theory of final utility (marginal utility it is called in the United States), which ultimately led to the general abandonment of the Marxian theory (properly speaking the Ricardian) on that matter. In the midst of the row Carpenter sent in his article on The Value of the Value Theory. He pointed out that the Marxian definition, speaking of "socially necessary labor" implies "socially useful labor" and thus gives its case away, since it brings in that element of utility upon which the Jevonian theory is based, and that it was just as easy to reduce different kinds of utility to abstract utility as to reduce different kinds of labor to abstract labor. Why trouble so much anyhow about *any* theory of value? Let the economists fight it out if they wanted to, but why bore the working man with this abstract theorizing merely to convince him that he was being robbed, when the facts of everyday life proved it so overwhelmingly? Drop this pedantic stuff, he urged, abandon your "scientific" jargon; if you want to reach the workers talk to them in a language they understand on matters which to them seem of real importance.

Those of my readers who interest themselves in that kind of thing are aware that quite apart from "labor" and "utility" theories of value the development of psychology has compelled us



all to regard economic problems in a different light altogether. Even in the old days the intelligent economist knew well enough that the abstraction necessary to his science, "economic man", was something very different to the real human. To-day when psychology shows us the real human moved by his emotions so much more than by his reason, moved so constantly by his traditions, his habits, his pipe-dreams, his prejudices, so little really by his economic interest, the abstraction is seen to be so far away from reality that the science founded on it has lost its former high place: the modern economist no longer dogmatically lays down iron laws as immutable as those of mathematics, he tells us merely of certain tendencies, and in regard to value he now defers to the psychologist very respectfully.

Carpenter's article "In Defense of Criminals", an examination of law, respectability, the virtues and vices and the moral codes, is very fine. I think it a wretched business that even Anarchists, like all the other radicals, will insist on republishing old stuff, revered antiquities, instead of new, fresh, up-to-date matter suitable for present-day purposes; but I admit that though as I have said (and as Carpenter himself said), much of Carpenter's work long ago lost its timeliness, his Defense of Criminals as a piece of propaganda is as good as ever.

#### EVOLUTIONARY THEORIES

His "Exfoliation," beautifully written, also I thought very fine. Biological science at the present time is not supporting his views, his Neo-Lamarckism. You know the two evolutionary theories over which the battle raged in those days—the "Darwinian", in which progress was made through the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, and the other, the "Lamarckian", in which function, will, desire, and the heredity of acquired characteristics play their part. In the Darwinian theory, the giraffe, for instance, has a long neck because those giraffes with long necks were able to reach the food high up in a dry season, while the short-necks died. In the Lamarckian theory the giraffe grew his long neck because he was so often stretching it to the utmost after food. The cause of progress in the Darwinian theory is a change of external conditions allowing the survival only of those whose chance variation makes them best fitted; in the other it would be a change internally, an inward growth, expressing itself first in the form of an intense desire and developing the body accordingly. Neither of these theories in its entirety is generally accepted today. Yet I think the Lamarckian theory, in so far as it is tenable, ought not to be forgotten by the Anarchists. If we leave biological evolution to consider the evolution of society it is evident that the Marxians who talk of nothing but external change are in that matter Darwinians, while we who, like Carpenter, while accepting that, put stress also upon the power of ideas and ideals are in accord so far with the Lamarckians.



I myself had, not long ago, a discussion with one of our ablest comrades, who thought otherwise. He had started to write a book on Anarchism. To make sure that he was not passing up anything he went back as far as the Desiccation of Central Asia. It was this desiccation (drying-up), he said, which, in the first place, as the trees were dying off, made the apes come down to the ground. They had not come down, he insisted, until they just had to. I wanted to argue with him that some of them probably came down a little earlier—to try it out, to enjoy the adventure. He would not have that. I finally compromised by admitting that the ancestors of the mass of humanity did not come down till they just had to; but I stuck to it that the Anarchists were descended from those who did not wait but came down a little earlier and set an example.

### LOVE'S COMING OF AGE

Much of Carpenter's work, written for the times, has been pretty well forgotten, so complete has been the triumph of common-sense. But his work on the sex question is so well-known to everybody who reads at all—even to the Anarchists who know so little of his other stuff—that it is not necessary for me to give an account of it. "Love's Coming of Age" has been read by many thousands who never heard anything of his other ideas. It has been translated into all the European languages and sold abroad up to the hundred thousand. It was, for the last generation, the book to be placed in the hands of youth; some other good books on the subject had caused shock and alarm when first looked into; this one was written with tact, with delicacy and with sentiment. Ellen Key's work did have a similar success, but she came in later than Carpenter. The success to which they both contributed—with many others—may be judged by the following extract from his book, "My Days and Dreams," written when he was seventy, in 1915: "It is curious to think that that was not twenty years ago—and what a landslide has occurred since then! In 1896 no "respectable" publisher would touch the volume, and yet today (1915) the tide of such literature has flowed so full and fast that my book has already become quite a little old-fashioned and demure!"

On one point in particular he was a pioneer. Homo-sexuality is now being freely discussed—in the literature of psycho-analysis, for instance. When Carpenter first dealt with it, it had always been strictly taboo. His pamphlet, "A Peculiar People," called attention to the fact that there existed in the body of society quite a number of individuals whom the sex feeling attracted not to the opposite sex but to their own; and he asked the public to re-examine its judgment that these people were necessarily disgusting criminals who must be punished to the utmost limit, assuring the public that as a matter of fact such a



temperament might be associated with refinement and intellect and he found in people of obvious social value.

There is no doubt that very often—generally, probably—homo-sexuality is environmental. Armies, navies, prisons, the separation of the sexes, are its usual origin, and temperament in such cases has probably but little to do with it. But that it is in many cases temperamental, constitutional, congenital, is, I believe, fully established. The judgment of the educated public has been softened and Carpenter was the first to plead for that.

Though Carpenter never in so many words, so far as I know, said that he himself was of that temperament it was pretty well understood that he was.

This work of his, this plea for a milder judgment of the homo-sexualists, pleased few of his friends. I remember Ernest Crosby, when I came to New York, asking me about Carpenter. I said I had not seen him for a long time but that I had heard that he was working on a new book dealing with friendship between two people of the same sex, that in fact I had mentioned it to Kropotkin when he had asked me the same question and Peter had rather turned up his nose at it. "Ah, no," said Crosby, very decidedly, "not even Peter Kropotkin has the right to turn up his nose at anything written by Edward Carpenter."

### HIS MYSTICISM

As I have said, Carpenter was a good deal of a mystic.

Myself I will have no compromise with authoritarian religion, whether it be that of the Roman Catholic Church, of the Jewish Law, of the Hindu Vedas, or of the Book of Mormon. We Libertarians are not against state authority only; we are not less against that authority from which at one time state authority claimed its origin and its sanction. If the job of exposing it were not being attended to so well by others we should have to tackle it seriously ourselves. But it seems to me that mysticism is another affair. It may be right or wrong; it may be useful or at least interesting or it may be merely misleading. But as a movement we are not called upon to deal with it, whatever we may think of it as individuals. I am not a mystic myself. But it seems to me that a man like Carpenter, who has freed his mind from the superstitions, who rejects all authority but his own reason, may be a mystic without departing from Libertarianism, just as he may believe that Mars is inhabited regardless of what the most of us think.

Of course, there are mysticisms dominated by the old superstitions and some presented in the old language—as Tolstoi's was to a great extent; but Carpenter's was not. And there are some mysticisms even more childish and silly than the old superstitions themselves. But Carpenter's mysticism was to me the most reasonably presented one and the most poetic I had come



across. For his theory about Cosmic Consciousness he argued ably and wrote most beautifully. He pointed out that as humans we had already developed a stage beyond the simple consciousness of the animals; we had developed self-consciousness, in which we were conscious not only of the sensation but of the being who felt it. He thought that some individuals among us had become conscious of their unity with all nature, of being at one with the universe, and that in time more and more of us would become so conscious, cosmic-conscious. He wrote books about it (see "The Art of Creation," if you are interested). Sometimes he put forward arguments which few of us could accept and made statements which I think showed him to be too credulous. But I have a notion that what he wrote on the matter will be read a long time after this and that more will be written on it.

### SOCIAL THEORIES

As a prophet, Carpenter was not always right; no matter how keen a prophet's insight some prophecies are bound to go wrong badly; all sorts of things unthought of at the time of the prophecy develop afterwards. For instance, when Carpenter wrote his "Non-Governmental Society" he felt sure that we must be close to the introduction of a society in which these would be the beginning of an approach to the communal ideal. He argued that the question of the unemployed in Britain was becoming too serious (even then), so serious morally as well as economically that something would have to be done, and that the solution when found would be the beginning of a time when the actual needs of life would be available in some measure for everybody, and that the industrial arrangements assuring them would inevitably tend towards some measure of communism. The unemployed situation in Britain has indeed had to be dealt with, as he said it would; but who the dickens would have dreamt then that even the powers that be could be so stupid as to deal with it on a mere dole basis, with no effort made at all to use the men's productive capacity, none whatever!

I do not mean that his program dealt only with the unemployed; he dealt with them in that article because at that time the solution of the problem was a burning question. He thought also that municipal socialism (public ownership as it is called in the United States) then being so rapidly introduced, would help to provide and to stabilize employment and to develop a sense of common interests. But his own particular faith was placed in the possibilities of the Co-operative Movement, which in Britain is very strong, and steadily, though not rapidly, progressive. Before ever the modern Socialist movement was really started in Britain, Carpenter had written a pamphlet dealing with co-operation at the Leclaire works in France. To most of the early Socialists, the Co-operative Movement was—as it still is, I am



afraid, to many of our own Libertarian comrades—a delusion if not a snare. To some it is even anathema. Carpenter then got no hearing at all.

### THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

When, years later, I was engaged in a campaign to bring into better understanding and closer connection the Anarchists and the old co-operators (the stout old anti-statists who controlled it before the Socialists finally took it up), Carpenter sent me, through a friend, his heartiest good wishes; and when I met him still later I found him completely in accord with me—that if the Anarchists were to join the Co-operators and give their movement real and serious study (not simply join to blow off at business meetings a lot of sentimental poppycock about communism) backing up the old co-operators with a more definite anti-statist theory, encouraging the development of production by producers' organizations and not merely by the consumers' wholesales, and explaining the possibility of the organization of exchange without gold currency, by something like what the Individualist—Anarchists call Mutual Banking, the nucleus of the new society could be created and *shown*—not merely explained, but *shown*—in action—an object lesson of the greatest importance.

No, he was not an authority on co-operation. He did not know much about its practical questions; they were not in his line, you know; but he could see in it clearly enough a great and most successful effort made by the workers; he recognized it as Libertarian in its methods; and he was sure that the path to emancipation lay through it somehow. What he had was not a program but a vision.

It proved impossible, however, to interest the Anarchists at that time. Kropotkin had an entirely mistaken conception of the British co-operative movement and would not listen. And though many of the others did give it a little polite attention and even a little tepid approval all of them had the same thing to say about it—that it seemed hardly much use pottering about the co-operative movement when the Revolution was evidently just around the corner and would be upon us before we could get properly started.

In vain we elaborated on Kropotkin's own teaching about the Paris Commune, how it had failed largely because the people had just elected a government and then waited for it to organize the new society, whereas in the next revolution the people must not wait but proceed themselves to the organization which takes so much more time than the revolt. We argued that if that teaching was right it would be still better if as much as possible of the organization was done *before* the revolt, if the experiment had been worked out, if a nucleus had been established, and a reserve



obtained of men who as co-operative directors had had some real practical experience in administration. We talked in vain. Ultimately the Socialists woke up, trimmed their dogmas a bit, went in and captured a large influence in the Co-operative Movement for themselves. Under the leadership of Sidney Webb they pooh-poohed the old idea of productive workshops organized by the producers themselves, to be linked with the distributive stores organized by the consumers, and they strengthened the officials of the consumers wholesale societies in their struggle to keep all production within their own hands, thus making any organization of exchange unnecessary. They made the movement, in short, as far as possible, a little model of the Socialist State and even in time brought the co-operators a little bit into politics. The Anarchists had lost their opportunity. Not till the rise of the Guild Socialists, many years afterwards, were any of these issues revived.

### A BLOODY REVOLUTION

Carpenter, be it remembered, though I have spoken of his strong communistic sentiment never accepted Anarchist-Communism in the form presented by Kropotkin. He was a very typical Englishman, who, however high his vision, wants to keep his feet on the ground and who when he decides to go forward goes with deliberation, step by step. To Carpenter, moreover, intensely a humanitarian, the idea of a bloody revolution full of bitter class hatred, introducing a new society of brotherhood was unthinkable. I feel sure that to his countrymen this Anarchism of his, which did not advocate "non-resistance" yet sought for non-violent means, would have made a great appeal if he had had a more practical acquaintance with industrial questions. On these matters he did not dare to say much; and his countrymen do not ask a propagandist, as the French people do, or the Jewish: What is your theory? but rather, What is your proposal? Not, What do you think about it? but, What are you going to do about it?

No, he was not a non-resistant. I had myself in 1889 put out a little manifesto in which, while attacking militarism and governmental violence I deprecated among Anarchists the preaching of hatred, violence and revenge as a gospel (this was in France just before the epidemic of bomb-throwing). So far as was humanly possible in the struggle, I urged, we should try to retain goodwill in our minds even to our opponents. That did not mean that we should allow ruffians to terrorize everybody, but merely that in whatever measures we found it necessary to take we should as intelligent people keep in mind the fact that philosophic ruffians were but creatures of circumstances and that of savagery or ferocity on our part also had an evil social effect. Hate might indeed be a more powerful motive than love, but intelligence would say that in the case of people who aimed at a



better society hate should be directed against institutions and not against individuals. Well, Carpenter mentioned to me once that he had read the manifesto and was entirely with me. But he would not have any dogma about it. He told me that he himself not long before had resorted to strong measures and administered a good thrashing to a friend of his. The friend had been indulging in long drinking bouts at the expense of his wife and children. Carpenter had sometimes before got him sobered up by talking to him, but the fellow was drinking more than ever. So Carpenter, in cold blood, as an experiment, thrashed him. He was so startled by a thrashing from a man so gentle in nature as Carpenter that he kept sober—no, no, not permanently, but for a much longer time than before.

Carpenter was not silly and could not tell the workers that when they were being beaten it would be a crime for them to put in a blow in return. He knew well enough that in the struggle of the workers against the exploitative system there would be hot blood and hard blows on both sides in plenty, no matter what was preached. But cruelty in cold blood, the ill-treatment of human beings continued after the excitement and danger had gone by, he could not tolerate. And he knew well, too, that the workers were at their best as workers, not as fighters, that they were strongest in the workshop and not on the battlefield and that they should seek therefore for economic methods and not turn to violence wilfully when other courses were open.

### HIS RANGE

He certainly dealt with a great range of subjects, a quite extraordinary range. One of his books would deal with the influence of art upon religion, another with the "Drama of the Future," the next tell in detail how in his own neighborhood the common lands were stolen from the people and who got them. He wrote upon "Empire and Imperialism" and upon "Smoke-Preventing Appliances." The song "England Arise," his own words and music, is now in the British radical movements second to Jim Connell's Red Flag only. It is significant that the two British writers who have dealt with China most ably before she came into her modern prominence were both of them our comrades, Bertrand Russell and Edward Carpenter. His little drama, "The Promised Land," (Moses), is just the thing for a Jewish comrade interested in his race's story to place in the hands of his son.

With all this there was not the slightest trace of the pedant, no pose, no affectation. No man made so many friends; if he took a walk anywhere he was sure before he got back to have encountered some poor fellow in trouble who had relieved himself by giving Carpenter his whole life history and receiving in return a little of that sympathy and comradeship in which Carpenter was so rich.



He was not merely sympathetic, he was always cheerful and he could be very jolly and gay. His humor helped him greatly, and a bit of fun seemed always welcome. I met him once when he was taking a vacation, as he was passing through Monte Carlo—of all the places in the world for two Anarchists to meet! He had been with his friend George (I forget his name) to the Casino, wanting to see the gambling with his own eyes; but admission had been denied them. They were dressed in their loose shirts, knickers and sandals, handsome fellows; and the Casino men evidently recognized them as personages. But, good gracious, they could not go into the Casino dressed like that! They must wear black coats, and put on trousers and collars. So they came to me. I had a position in which I had occasionally to appear in respectable togs, so I fixed them up as well as I could. The trouble was that I was four or five inches taller than Carpenter. I have forgotten what we did about the trousers—tucked them up and stitched them, I suppose—but I remember that my long frock coat when Carpenter put it on was not like a frock coat at all but an overcoat. Carpenter in his own costume looked every inch what he was—the scholar and the poet; but in my togs he looked like nothing so much as an old-clothes man! We shouted with laughter, Carpenter as loudly as the others; he added to the grotesquerie by refusing to wear my collar and buying a paper one. I am sure that alone he could never have got by the horror-stricken guardians at the door; but fortunately George was more my height and in my clothes he saved the day. While Carpenter wore a full beard, George had a military-looking moustache and he was very straight in the back and broad in the shoulders; nobody could take him for anything less than a lieutenant-colonel. So George went first, with dignity enough for a duke (though he had really been born in the slums), and Carpenter sneaked modestly in behind him.

There is a fine poem about the gambling in his "Towards Democracy." But, of course, no trace of the fun; there was no humor in his poetry.

### HIS POETRY

I have left his poetry to the last, partly because I am not quite a competent critic in that matter. An Anarchist, to be consistent, ought to be ready in his welcome to the new forms of literature and poetry, typical of emancipation from long-accepted conventions. But alas, a man cannot be just what he likes, and I have to confess that the older forms still appeal to me more strongly. His "Toward Democracy" (he was using the word Democracy in the sense of a society of equals, not thinking of democratic government) is a collection of beautiful thoughts and aspirations presented in the form familiarized to us by Walt Whitman—without rhyme and without definite metre—rhetorical



prose to many of us. He stands below Whitman to most people, if only because he comes later and was obviously much influenced by the older man; but in one way his stuff is superior to Whitman's. Even those of us who get great inspiration from Walt must admit that often in the midst of beautiful and inspiring thought we come across a word or a phrase so incongruous that one feels like laughing. Whitman's stuff is that of a man of the people, whose taste has not been highly cultivated, who just had the poetry in him; Carpenter's is, of course, that of a highly educated man, familiar with poetry from the Greeks down, whose taste is always flawless. Walt's is sometimes indeed a "barbaric yawp," as he says himself, though loud and strong, while Carpenter's is always sweet, gentle, thoughtful and musical. He has many followers who insist on placing him first. The two are different anyway, in origin, in tradition, and in temperament.

Judge for yourself, here is a bit of his in rhyme:

All down the ages comes a cry of anguish,  
Where workers toil and sweat without release,  
That others may grow rich the while they languish  
In poverty and pain till life shall cease.  
Always a cry of men in desperation,  
Of women, ay, and children, stung beneath  
The slaver's whip—the chain, the scanty ration,  
The goad of hunger, and the fear of death.

Always the Land, the one means of existence,  
Snatched from the peasant-folk by guile and force;  
Always brave hearts of manhood and resistance  
Crushed by machine-like Law without remorse;  
Always the seamstress in her attic dreary,  
The miner in his murky tomb immersed,  
The factory hand, the clerk—ill, worn and weary—  
By those for whom they toil, unknown, ignored.

Ah yes! and always through the strife and tangle,  
Through all the cries and counsels of despair,  
A music heard that silences the jangle,  
A rising chord of Hope that fills the air.  
Always the song—despite the world's derision  
Of suffering hearts that welded into one,  
In dream prophetic, self-fulfilling vision,  
Of days to be—the City of the Sun.

Always of things unseen one surest token—  
Their deep foundation in the human breast;  
The words, now dark within, that shall be spoken—  
Freedom and Comradeship from East to West.



Always from weakness a new strength emerging,  
From sorrow shared a greater ecstasy;  
Always the common soul and purpose urging  
To Life and Love and Power and Victory.

### THE ADDRESS

Here is a Congratulatory Address presented to him on his seventieth birthday by a large body of admirers, among them many with names known all the world over:

" . . . . Your books with no aid but your own originality and power have found their way among all classes of people in our own and other lands, and they have everywhere brought with them a message of fellowship and gladness. At a time when society is confused and overburdened by its own restlessness and artificiality, your writings have called us back to the vital facts of Nature, to the need of simplicity and calmness, of just dealing between man and man, of free and equal citizenship, of love, beauty and humanity in our daily life.

"We thank you for the genius with which you have interpreted great spiritual truths, for the deep convictions underlying all your teaching that wisdom must be sought not only in the study of external nature but also in a wider knowledge of the human heart, for your insistence upon the truth that there can be no real wealth of happiness for the individual apart from the welfare of his fellows, for your fidelity and countless services to the cause of the poor and friendless, for the light you have thrown on so many social problems, and for the equal courage, delicacy and directness with which you have discussed various questions of sex, the study of which is essential to a right understanding of human nature.

We have spoken of your many readers and friends, but in your case to a degree seldom attained by writers your readers are your friends, for your books have that rare quality which reveals 'the man behind the book,' and that personal attraction which results only from the widest sympathy and fellow-feeling. For this, most of all, we thank you—the spirit of comradeship which has endeared your name to all who know you and to many who to yourself are unknown."

### HIS FUNERAL

For some years before his death he had not been able to reply to inquiries. He had gone, or been taken, from his old home near Sheffield to a place in the South of England—I presume for the sake of the milder climate. I cannot make out how it was that when he died the Church was able to get possession of his body for a religious burial service. The idea of Carpenter, of all men, being buried in such fashion! I always carry Carpenter in my mind with two other men, personal friends of his, poets



both, men of much the same views and character, with J. William Lloyd and with Ernest Crosby. Lloyd is still thinking and writing, much loved by a circle of friends, at Freedom Hill, Roscoe, in California. Crosby died twenty years ago. He had had an experience much like Carpenter's: When an international judge in Egypt he had come across a book of Tolstoi's and he too had to change his life entirely. A while after his death, Michael Monahan, in the name of his friends, wondering what had become of the book we knew he had been writing, went to see his widow and was told that the book had been burned. And the Church, you see, captured Carpenter's body: though after its ceremonies were over the friends who had been unable to stop them came forward and bade him, in their own fashion, a last farewell. The principal speaker was H. W. Nevins, whose books, including the two volumes of his reminiscences and his anthology of liberty, have been so widely read by intellectual people. I met him last, forty years ago in London, at a meeting of the Freedom Group.

### WERE HIS EFFORTS WASTED?

A few days ago I received a letter from another old comrade who had seen about Carpenter's death and been deeply affected by it. He writes me: "Another link with the past gone. It saddens me doubly. Carpenter, Morris, Kropotkin and others like them once meant so much to me. Their writings, their preaching and teaching seemed as if they would mould the world into a better shape, kindle a more human fire in men's minds. But, alas, it seems to me now that their efforts were largely wasted. What effect they had was only in the few more or less of the same type as themselves. Henry Ford introducing cheap reliable autos has made more change in men's minds and lives than all the preachers, educators and poets."

Why, my dear old comrade, you are too deeply depressed just now. It was part of Carpenter's own teaching that this very progress in science and invention, though it gave us greater opportunity, brought danger with it and called for greater responsibility. More than ever, in face of such material progress do we need the voice of a Carpenter. As H. G. Wells put it some time ago, "In social affairs we are witnessing a race between education and catastrophe." It may be, though I myself do not feel so despondent, that our own society is not going to get beyond that stage of "civilization" of which Carpenter wrote, and that we shall fall back like the old societies or stay stagnant as China did so long. But some day, some society will get beyond it, I am sure. And I am also sure that the struggle now is entirely worth while, even if we of our generation do not achieve success. Why be so blue about Carpenter? I know of no man whose life was more reasonable, more consistent, more inspiring, more successful, better lived. Henry Ford made a good mechanical job and got



his reward for it, including the millions. Carpenter had no desire to be a Ford; what he hoped was that his teaching and his life would lead others like you and me, to think and act as he did and so affect others in their turn. If there is any nobler or more useful way to spend one's life I do not know of it. We cannot be absolutely sure that we are right even in the main; we know that in some part we *must* be wrong; we cannot be certain at all of success, nor of our personal happiness; but if we are to make the best we can of our lives that surely is the sensible way to use them.

You say further that, "if those men of genius who taught and preached have had so little effect, if they do not agree, and if we are not sure even now which one of them was right, it ill behooves one of the mediocre majority like myself to put forth opinions."

It is evident, old comrade, that you have forgotten the main lesson of Carpenter's life, of that Carpenter whom you so admired. Carpenter, as I sized him up, was not a man of giant intellect—and I am sure did not so consider himself—but a man like you and me. The endowment that made him great was not a superhuman brain capacity—though what capacity he had he certainly used very actively—it was his intense sincerity, his intellectual honesty, his splendid mental courage. When awakened by Whitman he did not halt to consider that intellectual giants like Adam Smith and Karl Marx, Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer had gone over the ground before he, a mere mediocrity, arrived at it. No, he went forward modestly but boldly, and reported to us what he saw himself, using—here is the secret of his "genius", as you call it—not the eyes of those who had gone before, though they had been good ones, still less the excellent spectacles one or two of them had left behind, but his own eyes, his own eyes, such as they were. He looked at things for himself and told us what *he* saw. Now and again, no doubt, he did not see the whole thing, once in a while his eyes deceived him and he saw things which were not there. What of it? We have to keep our own eyes open. Is it any argument why you should not in your turn use yours and then speak out your mind boldly as he did, not as that of an oracle conveying to the world the dictates of a deity, merely as that of a man who sees and thinks for himself. The man who does that, my dear fellow, ceases to be a mediocrity. No matter how deficient he may be in a scholastic education, or lacking in other advantages, no matter how obscure he has been and how obscure he remains, he has nevertheless, in that noble comradeship of which Edward Carpenter sang, achieved full membership.

T. H. BELL



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